summerschool UTRECHT

Introduction to Generative Syntax
17.08.2020 - 21.08.2020

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Monday 17-08	
Theme	The framework, constituency
Description	We will cover some basic issues with which linguists are concerned, in particular from a syntactician's point of view. We will discuss how human language is perceived and what is assumed about it, as well as how we come to have these assumptions. We will also introduce a basic concept in syntax: hierarchical structure.
Topics	• The field of syntax in linguistics • The purpose and approach of syntax • The innateness hypothesis and Universal Grammar • Grammaticality and acceptability • Universality, diversity, and parameters • Hierarchical structure, constituency

Tuesday, 18-08		
Theme	Phrase structure and theta theory (the role of lexical semantic representations)	
Description	The structural regularity in language is robust. In order to capture this, linguists started with phrase structure (rewrite) rules and developed X-bar theory. Students will learn to represent hierarchical structure of actual sentences using syntactic trees, on the basis of their own argumentation as to why the structure should be that way rather than other logical possibilities.	
Topics	• Grammatical categories • Rewrite rules • X-bar schema • Constituency	• Arguments and functional categories • Theta-roles/semantic roles • Subcategorization

Wednesday, 19-08	
Theme	Movement
Description	Many sentences seem to arise from another, more basic form, from which elements have abstractly been moved to other positions. We discuss what motivates these movement operations, what sort of movements are at work, how the structural mechanisms interact with movement and how the analyses explain linguistic data.
Topics	• NP-movement • Wh-movement • Verb movement • Movement rules

Thursday, 20-08	
Theme	Empty categories and binding theory
Description	We assume the presence of grammatical elements which are inaudible but linguistically significant. We discuss these 'empty categories' and their dependency on other elements in the sentence. This dependency leads us to the topic of anaphora and binding theory.
Topics	• Traces, pro, and PRO • Anaphora and binding theory

Friday, 21-08	
Theme	Covert movement and linguistics as a science
Description	Our interpretation of a given sentence depends on the structural analysis of it. We will discuss the relationship between syntax and semantics and consider LF (logical form) as a part of syntax. We wrap up the course with a reassessment of the syntactic approach and the methodology that is used in linguistic research, taking the view of linguistics as a science.
Topics	• Syntax-semantics interface • LF movement • Empirical data and theory construction